

# Examining Caste and Religion in Post-Industrial Mumbai

*A Case Study of Mumbai's Ex-Millworkers Occupational Choices*



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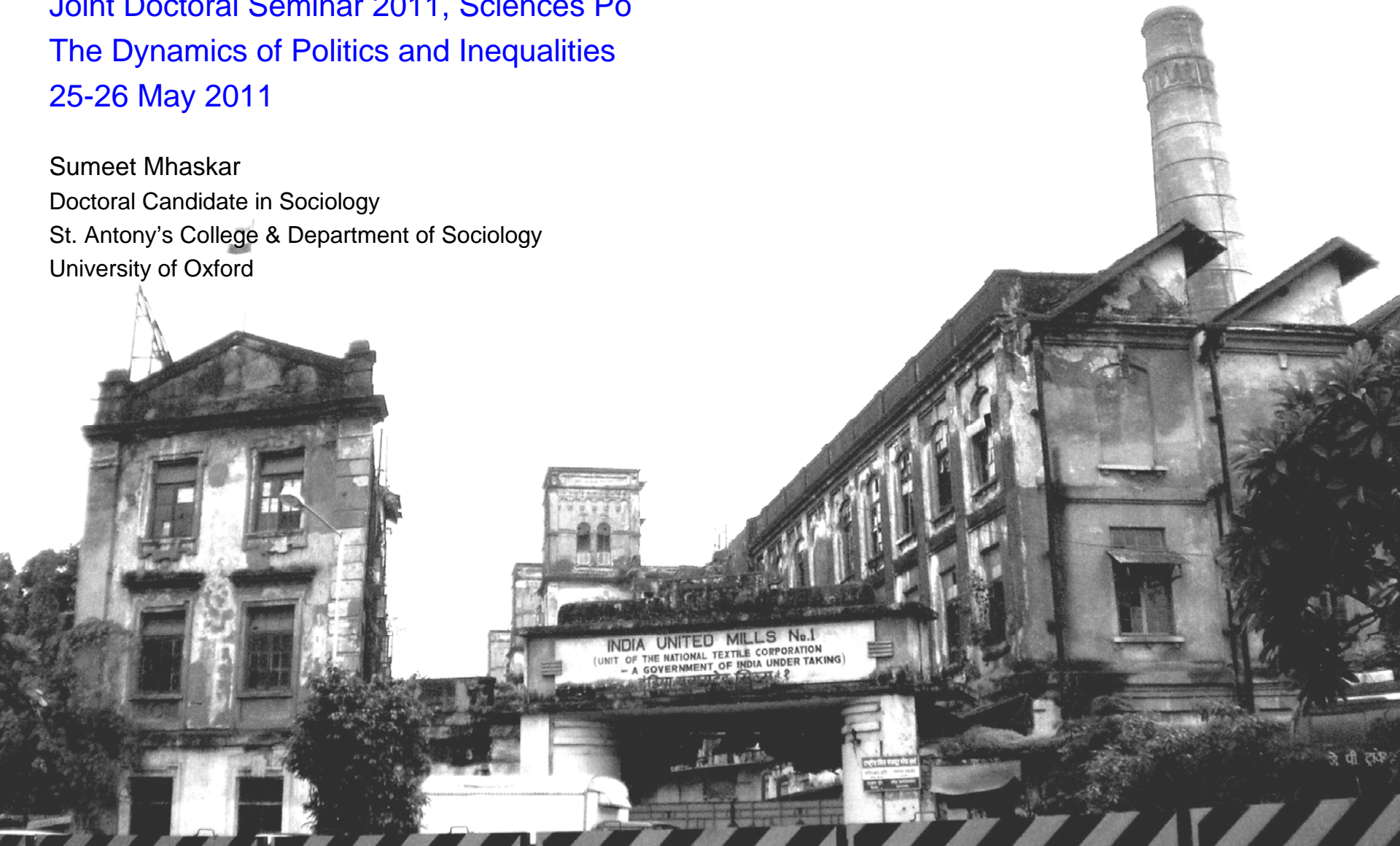
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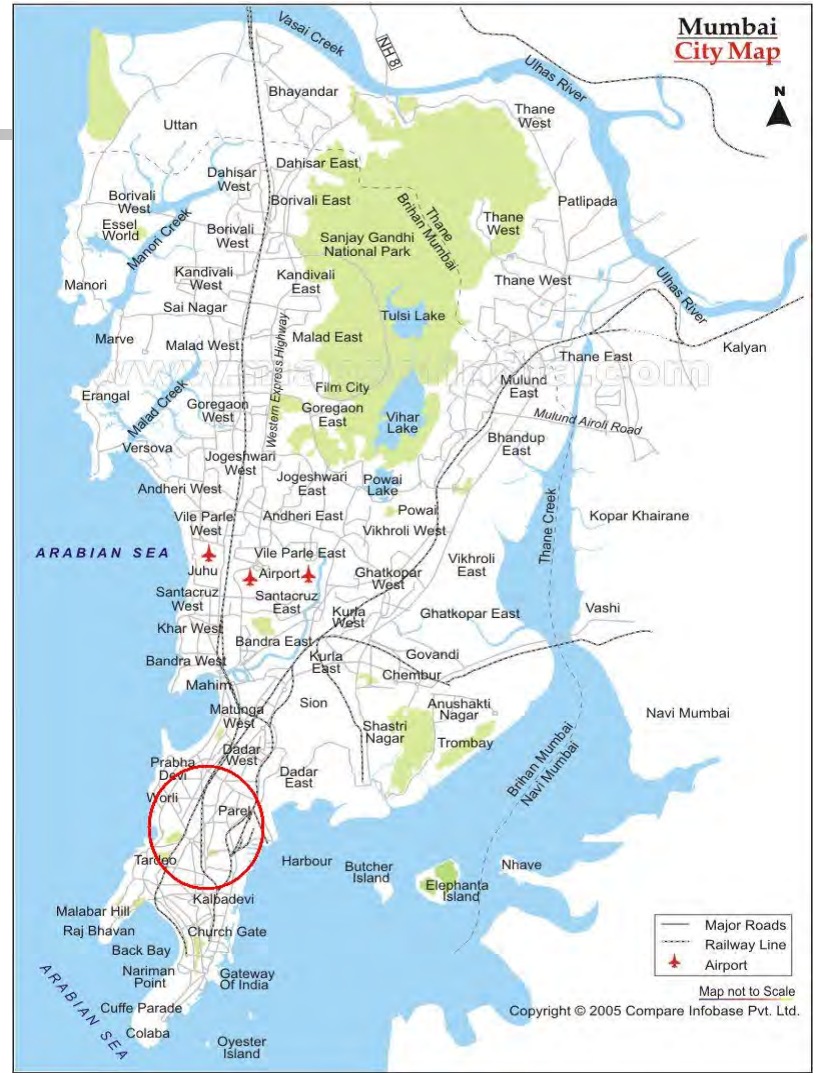
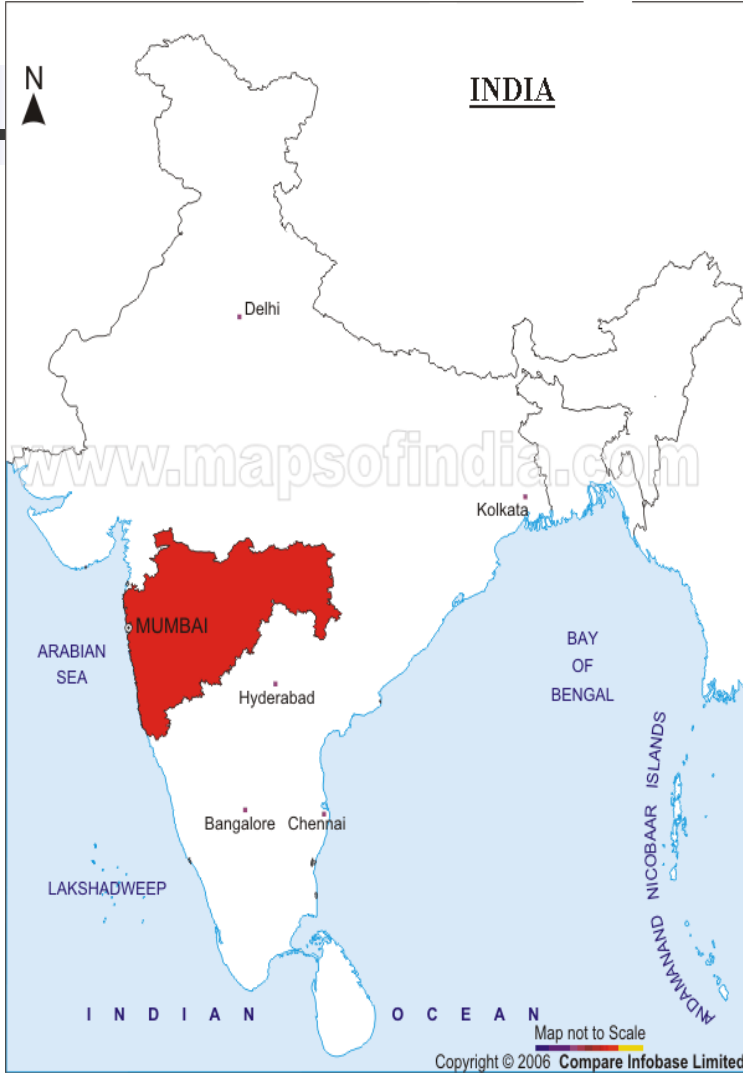
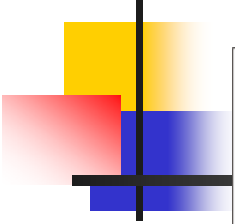
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# Overview

- Questions
- Data and Methods
- Towards a Post-Industrial Mumbai
- Caste, Religion and Occupation in Industrial Mumbai: Textile Mills, Parallel Work and 1982 Mumbai Textile Strike
- Caste, Religion and Occupation in Post-Industrial Mumbai: Employment and Small Businesses.
- Conclusion



# Questions

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- Are social institutions, such as caste and religion, affecting (or not) ex-millworkers' occupational choices?
- What is happening to caste and religion as social institutions and how far are existing inequalities and hierarchies buttressed?



# Data and Methods

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- Mumbai's Ex-Millworkers' who lost their jobs since late 1990s.
- Interviews: Snowball Sampling
- Survey Data : From Quota Sampling to Opportunistic Method.

## Survey Data

Caste Groups	Freq	%	Freq	%
High Caste Hindus	441	43	386	42
Hindu Other Backward Castes	399	38	357	39
Dalits	107	10	94	10
Muslims	37	04	36	04
Miscellaneous	53	05	51	06
<b>Total</b>	<b>1037</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>100</b>

## Interviews

Caste Groups	Freq	%
High Caste Hindus	19	24
Hindu OBC	03	04
Dalits	28	35
High Caste Muslims	24	30
Muslim OBC	04	05
Nomadic Tribes	02	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>



# Mumbai: Towards a Post-Industrial City

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- Textile Mills Closure in *Girangaon*
  - 58 Textile Mills employing around 250,000 in early 1980s and 150,000 by early 1990s
  - Allied Industries depending on textile industry.
  - Share of organized/formal sector employment has reduced from 65% in 1961 to 35% in 1991
  
- Post- Industrial Economy
  - Banking, Insurance, Information Technology Enabled
  - Shopping Malls, Entertainment Industry
  - Increase in the service sector employment from 303, 557 in 1980 to 753, 624 in 1998



## Caste & Occupation: The Debate

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- Caste (or *jatis*) and its association with occupations and status
  - Occupations ascribed by birth
  - Restrictions on occupational mobility
- Modernization Thesis: Weakening of community identities in urban industrial context (e.g. Srinivas 1969).
- Caste, religion and gender determined what work individuals did in the textile mills (Chandavarkar 1994).
  - Exclusion of Dalits (ex-untouchables) from Weaving Sheds
  - Muslims as 'neo-untouchables' (Hansen 2001).





## Parallel Work

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- 100/1037 (nearly 10 per cent) engaged in Parallel Work
  - Straddled formal as well informal economy.
  - Supplementing Income
- 15 % Engaged in Caste Based Work
  - Charmakars (Leather Workers), Sutar (Carpenter), Nhavi (Barber)
- 85 % Non-Caste Occupations
  - High castes in cleaning and manual occupations.
  - Fast Food: Absence of Dalits and Muslims.





# 1982 Strike Work

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- 18 Months strike involving 250,000 workers
  - 608/1037, nearly 60 per cent in our survey were affected by the strike.
  - 405/608, around 67 per cent, did some work while the rest did not take up any work during the 18 months strike.
- Only 2% in caste based work
  - Barber, Carpenter, Goldsmiths, Leather Work
- Rest
  - 24 % Farming
  - Again, Dalit and Muslims absent from the fast food
  - Only Dalits and Muslims engaged in Scrap Metal Collection
  - Wage Labour relation weak & Small Businesses still relevant

## Caste, Religion & Occupation in Post-Industrial Mumbai

- More than 60 per cent are engaged in some kind of job after the closure of mills.
  
- 70 % in Wage Labour
  - 40 % in Security, Courier & Shops.
  - Within each group: 46 % High Caste Hindus; 39 % OBC Hindus, 46 % Dalits and 16 % Muslims
  
- 30 % Small Businesses
  - Only 3 per cent in Caste based Occupations. Footwear Stitching & Selling, Religious Preacher, Goldsmiths, Carpenter, Barber, Laundry, Weaving & Fishing
  - Absence of Dalits and Muslims Fast Food.



## Conclusion

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- Very few ex-millworkers engaged in their caste based occupations.
- Wage Labour shows weak trend in terms of the influence of caste on occupation but does show some trend for the less participation of Muslims.
- Self –Employment/Small Businesses is where some caste clustering is seen. Esp. the absence of Dalits and Muslim from Fast Food and *only* their engagement in Scrap Metal Collection.
- New hierarchies are created by making Muslims are neo-untouchables.



# Comments and Suggestions

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Thank You